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SUBJECT: OSCE/PERMANENT COUNCIL: STATEMENT ON RUSSIA

¶1. Post is authorized to present the following statement at the Permanent Council in Vienna on December 18.

Begin text:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

On December 14, Police in Moscow and St. Petersburg detained over 200 peaceful protestors at demonstrations, for which permission was not granted, led by opposition groups including Other Russia and the Union of Soviet Officers in Moscow.

The difficulties faced by protest organizers, at the hands of authorities, in their attempts to receive permits as well as the harsh methods used to detain protestors raise serious concerns about the willingness of the Russian government to respect the exercise of freedoms of assembly and expression.

Peaceful protests, marches, and demonstrations are a cornerstone to the development and functioning of a democratic society. We continue to urge the Russian government to respect its OSCE commitments for freedom of assembly and expression.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

End text.

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